THE

NARRATIVE

AND

AFFIDAVIT-MEN Detected:

OR,

COLLCOTT and *ROBIN*

Put to the

BLUSH.

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

UPON the 18th of *March* was publiſhed in the *Daily Journal* the *Extract* of a Letter from *Verſailles*, the Deſign of which was to deſtroy the Proofs the Publick had received, concerning the Repairing and Opening the Port and Harbour of *Dunkirk*; whether this Letter was written by Monſieur *Ricouart*, Intendant of the *Marine* at *Dunkirk*, I won't take upon me to determine, but if ſo he acted like a true Frenchman, whoſe Buſineſs it is to amuſe the People of *England*, till the *Dunkirkers* ſhall have finiſhed their whole Plan: Nay, Monſieur *Ricouart*'s Civility to Colonel *Armſtrong* has this remarkable Circumſtance attending it, that he made him the Compliment of his Coach, and waited on him himſelf; but whether this was to ſhew him the Works, or to hinder him from ſeeing them, I find is a Point diſputed both on this and the other Side the Water; He likewiſe did him the Honour of *clapping* Centries at his Door, but in what Senſe the Colonel took this, let him declare in his next Report.

The Occaſion of taking Notice of this ſilly Letter at preſent is, that another Piece has been handed about within theſe few Days, under the Title of *The Joint and Separate Account or Narrative of* Geo. Collcott *and* Robert Jones *Mariners, relating to what paſſed at their ſeveral Meetings with others, about the Affair of* Dunkirk, which ſeems to be written with the ſame Spirit and Deſign, and which, by the ſtrong Reſemblances betwixt them, one would think muſt be a Child of the ſame Parent.

The *Frenchman* ſays in his Letter—That theſe Reports could be ſuggeſted and ſpread abroad only by Men of turbulent Spirits, who have endeavoured to inſinuate the ſame, with a View of diſturbing the good Harmony, which now ſubſiſts between the two Crowns. The Narrative has the ſame Thing,

with a little Alteration of Phraſe; for there *George Collcott* and his Friend *Robin* ſay, that they underſtand from the Converſation in general, which they had at their Meetings, that the Complaint and Noiſe about *Dunkirk* was made with an Intent to break the Peace, &c.

From this and ſeveral other Paſſages it will appear, that if they are not the Work of the ſame Hand, they are at leaſt done by Perſons in the ſame Intereſt, and ſuch as are no Enemies to what has been doing at *Dunkirk*.

The Natrative tells us that the Complaint was not only made with Intent to break the Peace, but to overturn Sir *R*—— *W*———, and caſt a Slur upon the preſent Meaſures—But muſt not the Folly of theſe Men be as great as their Wickedneſs to attempt to overturn two ſuch great Men as Sir *R*—— *W*——— and his Brother, by a Couple of ſuch inſignificant Inſtruments as *Collcott* and *Jones*? Yet ſo the Narrative would make us believe, nay they were all to be made great Men, and at one of the Meetings a certain Gentleman told them, that *if they ſucceeded in the Affair about* Dunkirk, *there would be Vacancies for every Body that had given their Attendance upon that Occaſion:* I ſuppoſe *Collcott* was to be made Chancellor of the Exchequer, and *Jones* Ambaſſador and Plenipotentiary; whereas I dare anſwer for it, that the Gentlemen, who took their Examinations, did not think either of them worthy to be made a *Collector* of the *Port* of *London*, tho' they had been proved to be Smuglers, as a certain Gentleman aſſerted them to be.

But who ingaged them to go and make their Affidavits before that learned and eloquent Chairman, Sir *John Gonſon*, and who has been at the Expence of printing, publiſhing, and diſperſing from the *Poſt-Office* this Affidavit ſo *Miniſterially* penn'd, I confeſs is more than I can gueſs.

I conceive it cannot be the worthy Magiſtrate before-named, who at his own Charge ſo frequently refreſhes the Publick with his eloquent Orations, in ſome of which a particular Charge is given againſt the heinous Sin of Perjury; for I am ſorry to ſay it, the chief Point aim'd to be proved by this Affidavit happens to be unluckily falſe.

Some Writers hold that Politicians may lie, provided Matters are ſo well laid that they cannot be detected in their Lies; but here our Affidavit-Men and their Inſtructors committed an unhappy Miſtake, for the Lord *B*——— is ſworn to have been preſent at one of their Meetings, and *Robert Jones* ſays (but *Bob* was always a great Lyar) he knew him, for he ſaw him when he came from *France*, rode by his Coach Side betwixt *Dover* and *Sittingbourn*, ſaw him likewiſe at Dinner at *Sittingbourn*, and had ſeen him at ſeveral other Times.—I ſay before they ventur'd ſo deep, they ſhould have enquired whether the ſaid Lord was within the Bills of Mortality at the Time ſworn, that there might at leaſt have been a Poſſibility of its being true; but ſee the ill Succeſs of Blundering; for it appears that the ſaid Lord was ſeveral Miles out of Town, at the Houſe of another noble Lord, who is ready to ſwear it himſelf, even to the Face of a certain *great Man*, who is in ſuch high Reputation for his *Veracity* and *Intelligence*, that he is forced to have Recourſe to the *ſupplimental Evidence* of *Collcott* and *Jones*; *worthy Supporters* to gain him a little Belief even with his own Party!

But no doubt this was look'd upon to be a fine Stroke of Politicks; for ſure no good Proteſtant, who believed this Lord to be preſent at theſe Meetings, would believe the Harbour of *Dunkirk* to be repaired in ſuch a Manner as to be able to receive a hundred and fifty Ships, ſome of three, four, and even five hundred Tons; or that the Keys were all repaired, and one built intirely new, and carried from the Town to near *Chateau Gaillard*—That a

ſtrong

ſtrong Wall is made from the *Jettee-Head*, on the Weſt-Side of the Channel to the *Risbanc*, and continued almoſt to the Old Cittadel — That the Sluice had been open'd, and the Water let out almoſt every Tide, to clear the Harbour of Mud; *&c.* — That, at Spring Tides, there is from eighteen to twenty Foot Water in the ſaid Harbour, and between the Beacons at the Mouth of the Channel no leſs than from twenty to twenty-two Foot — That ſeveral Beacons are erected on both Sides the Channel up to the Town, and that Soldiers as well as others were daily at Work in clearing and repairing the Harbour with Stones taken from the Demolition, and others brought as far as from *Boloigne* —— That ſeveral new Ships have been launch'd in the Harbour, particularly one in *January* laſt, of ninty five Foot on the Keel, with Ports for thirty-ſix Guns — That there are others upon the Stocks ready to be launch'd —— That Ships are obliged to take their Ballaſt up out of the Harbour, in order to render it deeper: —— That the Waters of *Mardick*, *Boubourg*, *Bergues*, *Moer* and *Furnes*, may in a ſhort Time be brought through the old Harbour and Baſon to improve the ſaid Port beyond what it was even in the late War. — I ſay who would believe all this, tho' it had been confirm'd by the concurrent Teſtimony of a Dozen Witneſſes, and known by ſeveral Members of the Houſe of Commons, nay confirm'd and even made ſtronger by the Evidence of the Government's Papers too; for this Lord's Preſence at theſe Meetings (like the Biſhop's Toe in the Milk, according to the Notions of the Vulgar) would have turn'd it all into Error and Falſhood. Well! the Lord's not being preſent was a little unfortunate, but the Meeting however was in *Durham-Yard*, which is ſome good Luck; and that Circumſtance alone, it is to be hoped, will, in the Opinion of ſome Perſons, ſink the Water in the Harbour of *Dunkirk* at leaſt Two Foot, and make the Ship which *Taylor* ſaid drew Eleven Foot abaft, to draw no more than Eight.

And here I cannot forbear making a Wiſh that the Worſhipful Sir *John Gonſon* would have been ſo good as to have taken the Affidavit of ſome Perſon, who had been an Eye-witneſs of what Monſieur *Blandiniere* has done, and that the like Methods were uſed to acquaint the Publick that the Order obtained from the Court of *France* (being the Fruit of this Enquiry) was already begun to be put in Execution.

This is a little Digreſſion; I muſt return to my Narrative. It is there alledged that the People, who made the Diſcoveries, had ſome Rewards promiſed them, and that one of the Gentlemen at the Meeting drew an Order upon the Treaſurer of the Troops at *Calais* to pay a Hundred Livres to *Benjamin Hayes*, for his Expences over. I am inclined to queſtion much the Correſpondence between the Gentleman named and the Treaſurer of the King's Troops at *Calais*; but no Doubt a French-man would very willingly advance Money to ſend over a Man who was coming on Purpoſe to diſcover to an *Engliſh* Parliament the Repairs that were made at *Dunkirk*, becauſe the Enquiry was manifeſtly intended for the Intereſt of *France* and not of *Great Britain*. As to the Promiſes ſaid to be made in Favour of *Buſbell*, it is to be hoped that this *true Affidavit* of *Colcott* and *Jones*, will do their Friend *Buſbell* more Service than their Evidence in the Houſe of Commons with thoſe that have it in their Power to bring him over without the Danger of being thrown into Gaol.

As I have taken Notice of thoſe Parts of the Affidavit, which are a little defective in Points of Truth, it is but juſt to obſerve upon thoſe, where the Facts are not to be conteſted.

I make no Doubt then but they met at the *Sun Tavern* behind the *Royal Exchange* on Saturday the 7th of *February*; that they dined in a large Room; that the Wine they drank was *Port*; nor will I diſpute but there might be

a *Screen* before the Door; which I think is a large Conceſſion, for there are thoſe who perhaps will maintain that where there is a *Screen* there muſt be ſome Roguery, becauſe of the great Noiſe which was made ſome Years ago about a *certain Screen*; but this I ſhall leave to the Conſcience of that *great Man*, who is beſt acquainted with the Uſe and Advantage of a *Screen*. But to go on, I believe it will not be denied but that a certain Gentleman went often in and out of the Room; but whether to draw Water, or to order the Waiters to draw Wine, I confeſs is not clearly made out; and I am ſorry the Affidavit did not ſet forth, whether or no there was a Chamber-Pot in the Room, becauſe it would have ſerv'd to have clear'd up the Matter; which I take to be a Circumſtance of as great Importance to the Affair of *Dunkirk*, as any Thing in the whole Affidavit.

There are ſeveral other Facts in this Affidavit, which I take to be undeniable; as that they dined at the *Swan Tavern* in *Thames-ſtreet*; that they were carried into a Parlour at Mr. *B*——'s Houſe in *Durham-Yard*; that Sir *W*—— *W*——, the two Mr. *P*——'s, and a tall young Gentleman they did not know, and Mr. *B*—— were there, but nobody elſe; that they dined that Day at the *Croſs-Keys* near *Covent-Garden*; nay, that they ſent Porters to their Wives to let them know that they ſhould not come home that Night; that they lay at the Star-Inn in the Strand; that they went in Coaches the next Day to the *Ordnance Coffee-Houſe, Old Palace-Yard*; that after their Examination, they dined at the *Sun-Tavern, Weſtminſter*; and which is more, I even believe that Mr. *E*—— paid the Reckoning. Then let the Friends of a certain Perſon in Power triumph; for who is it, that believes all this, will believe that *Dunkirk* is repaired!

But theſe Circumſtances were before made known by a certain Perſon in a high Station and in a certain Place, who in theſe Particulars has ſupported the Evidence of *Colcott* and *Jones* much better than they have done his in Reſpect to the Lord's being preſent at the Meeting.

This Gentleman is the *Argos* of the State; nothing can eſcape his penetrating Sight; for ſcarce a ſingle Patriot, much leſs a Number of them, can dine beyond *Fleet-Ditch*, but he will tell you whether their Dinner was *Fowl* or *Mutton*; their Wine *French* or *Port*. How happy is this Nation in a Genius which always buſies itſelf in ſuch ſublime Diſcoveries! and how pleas'd ought the People to be to ſee the Money allow'd for *ſecret Service*, laid out in procuring Intelligence ſo eſſential to the publick Safety! And ſure this Money is better laid out than the like Sum would have been in detecting the ſeveral indirect Practices in Trade betwixt *Dunkirk* and *Ireland*, and other Places; which *Buſhell* and *Colcott* both offer'd to do to this Man of Vigilance, who then gave them a deaf Ear, tho' he is pleaſed to liſten to them now.

But to ſpeak a little more ſeriouſly upon this Matter.——If *Dunkirk* be a National Concern; if the repairing and opening its Harbour muſt prove a Thing of pernicious Conſequence to *Great Britain*, Was the bringing this Enquiry upon the *Tapis* the Duty of a Man of Honour or not? If the Gentlemen who ſtir'd it endeavoured to find out the moſt authentick Proofs, by enquiring of thoſe, who trade all the Year to the very Place, and muſt know the Truth; if they promiſed to indemnify them from any Loſs or Damage they ſhould ſuſtain by making the Diſcovery, or even if they had given them Money to ſatisfy them for their Loſs of Time; if they kept their Proceedings about it ſecret, till it ſhould be moved in a proper Place. This Affidavit evinces the Neceſſity there was of doing ſo. Is there any Thing in all this of which they have the leaſt Cauſe to be aſhamed? Do they pretend to alledge that they were deſired to give Evidence of any

Thing

Thing they did not know of their own Knowledge? Or can any of them ſay that any Words were put into their Mouths?

» There was nothing which we ever had more at Heart than the Deſtruction of the *Port* and *Harbour of Dunkirk*, and few Things which we either apprehend more or had more Reaſon to apprehend than the *Reparation* and *Reſtoration* of the ſame. When it appeared therefore, by inconteſtable Proof, that this *Port* and *Harbour* had been long repairing and were almoſt reſtored to their former Perfection; and this at a Time when our *Miniſters* valued themſelves upon the *Fidelity* of *France* to them. And upon their mighty Influence there, one would have thought that the *Miniſters* might have been very well ſatisfied with evading a direct Queſtion upon their Conduct and getting out of this Difficulty with Impunity. But one could have hardly expected what we ſee happen, that inſtead of endeavouring to have this whole Matter forgot as ſoon as poſſible, they ſhould daily refreſh the Minds of Men about it, and renew the Talk of it, as if it tended to their Honour, that inſtead of excuſing themſelves for having ſuffered *Dunkirk* to be reſtored, they ſhould venture to accuſe others for having proved this Neglect or even Connivance upon them; as if they modeſtly imagined that a Meaſure neceſſary for aſſerting the Honour and Intereſt of the Nation on ſo eſſential a Point, and which has already ſo good an Effect, could be rendered unpopular, becauſe *Collcott* and *Jones* imagined it might be intended to overturn Sir *R*—— *W*—— and caſt a Slur upon his Meaſures. A fine Compariſon to hope to raiſe a Spirit upon, between the National Intereſt about *Dunkirk* and the Preſervation of Sir *R*—— *W*——'s Power!

LONDON:
Printed for *A. Moore* near St. *Paul's*.
1730.

March 1729
Dunkerk affidavits

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